DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 181 304 CE 023 903

AUTHOR Hoyt, Kenneth B.
TITLE Parents and Career Education: Descriptions of Current Practices. Monographs on Career Education.
INSTITUTION Office of Career Education (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Sep 79
NOTE 25p.: Not available in paper copy due to small print
AVAILABLE FROM Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 (Stock No. 017-080-02050-05)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Development; *Career Education; *Career Planning; Decision Making; Elementary Secondary Education; Family Environment; Family Influence; Family Involvement; Family Life; Family Role; Parent Influence; *Parent Participation; Parent Responsibility; *Parent Role; *Parent School Relationship; Parent Student Relationship; Parent Teacher Cooperation; Program Descriptions

ABSTRACT

Conceptualized as an equal partner with the formal education system and the business/labor/industry/professional/government community in effective delivery of career education, the home/family structure has not received proper emphasis. Career education coordinators participating in a miniconference recognized parents' rights and responsibilities in their child's career decision making but differed as to parent interest. They recommended informing parents about general as well as specific topics in education, involving them in the delivery of education, clarifying the career development process, and developing parent interest and involvement. Some specific efforts in local communities to increase parental involvement have already been put into practice. Implications drawn from participant recommendations and discussions of current practice are (1) career education implementation efforts must reach all parents, (2) not all parents must participate for them to be an important component; (3) youth whose parents do not participate must be served; (4) parents should gain basic understandings of career development and basic skills in acquiring and using career information, (5) the collaboration of parents with counselors and teachers must be closer, (6) parents should help children see the presence and value of work within the home/family structure, and (7) parents should emphasize productive use of leisure time. (YLB)

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MONOGRAPHS ON CAREER EDUCATION

PARENTS AND CAREER EDUCATION:

DESCRIPTIONS OF CURRENT PRACTICES

by
Kenneth B. Hoyt, *Director*
Office of Career Education

September 1979

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON: 1979

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402

Stock No. 017-080-02050-5

Preface

This monograph is one in a series designed to report, in narrative form, discussions that took place during a series of "miniconferences" for local K-12 Career Education Coordinators. A total of 15 such "miniconferences' were held between the period beginning in January and ending in July of 1979. This monograph, like all others in this series, is based on the notes I took while conducting each of these 15 "miniconferences". The OCE contractor responsible for logistical arrangements and for preparation of final notes (as corrected by the participants) was Inter America Research Associates of Rosslyn, Virginia. That Contractor has compiled and published a limited quantity of the final notes. Copies of that report, while they last, may be obtained by writing to the Office of Career Education, U.S. Office of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202.

Participants for this series of miniconferences were selected by OCE based on nominations received from State Coordinators of Career Education. Each such Coordinator was asked to nominate, as possible participants, those K-12 Career Education Coordinators who, in the opinion of the State Coordinator, were doing the best job in implementing career education in their State. It is not, then, in any way a random sample of local K-12 career education coordinators whose experiences and opinions are reported here. Rather, these participants should be viewed as among the best in the opinion of their State Coordinators. Because it was impossible to select all persons nominated, there were many outstanding local Coordinators around the Nation who were not selected as participants.

An attempt was made to secure nominations from all 50 States plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico and to pick a minimum of two local career education coordinators from each State as participants. The original plan was to select 10 participants—one each from 10 different States—as participants in each of the 15 miniconferences. Logistical problems prevented us from reaching this objective of having 150 participants. The final count of participants was 131 persons who, in combination,came from 45 different States and the District of Columbia. The actual number of participants in each miniconference ranged from a low of 7 to a high of 10 with a statistical average of 8.7 persons in attendance at each of the 15 miniconferences.

Each miniconference was conducted in the same basic way. We started by asking each participant to list the most practical and pressing issues, problems, and concerns she/he is facing in attempting to implement career education. A total of 407 such topics--an average of 27+ per miniconference—were raised by participants. Following this, participants were asked to vote on the 5-6 issues that they considered most crucial of all those raised at their miniconference. As time permitted, then, participants in each miniconference "brainstormed" the priority topics they had selected by their votes. Extensive discussions were held on 49 such priority topics, several of which are discussed in this monograph. In

addition, each participant was asked to present a short oral description of his/her attempts to implement career education in a given community and to share materials with other participants. Those reports and materials also form part of the content of each monograph in this series.

While no exact statistical data were gathered, it appears that participants in this series of miniconferences had, on the average, somewhere between five and six years of experience in attempting to implement career education. The basic purpose of each monograph in this series is to share this rich reservoir of experience with others interested in problems associated with the implementation of career education at the K-12 levels of Education.

The most striking observation one could make about participant comments was, as expected, the wide diversity of means they have found for overcoming the practical problems facing those charged with implementing career education. It should be obvious, to any thoughtful reader, that there is no one best solution for any given problem. Rather, the best way to solve a particular problem will vary from community to community, from State to State, from school districts of various sizes, and from rural, suburban, and urban settings. It is, thus, a diversity of answers that the reader will hopefully find in the monographs in this series.

It will be equally obvious, to the experienced reader, that the practices of these experienced local career education coordinators varies greatly from much of the theoretical/philosophical literature of career education. It is very seldom that practitioners, faced with the multitude of practical constraints that exist at the local community level, can put into practice what those who, like myself, have the time to think, write, and speak about. I am impressed by how close many of them have come. I am even more impressed by some of the innovative, creative solutions some have found that go considerably beyond what the fulltime career education conceptualizers have yet been able to think about.

I am most impressed by the dedication, commitment, and professional expertise that participants demonstrated, over and over again, during this series of miniconferences. They are the real experts in career education. I hope that, just as I have learned from them, so, too, will their thoughts and their experiences be helpful to you.

—Kenneth B. Hoyt, Director
Office of Career Education
United States Office of Education

Parents and Career Education: Descriptions of Current Practices

Kenneth B. Hoyt
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Introduction

The career education movement has, since early 1972, been described by some of its conceptualizers as a three-pronged effort involving (a) the formal Education system; (b) the business/labor/industry/professional/Government community; and (c) the home/family structure. A very great deal has been said and done with regard to career education activities carried out within the formal Education system. Similarly, the literature on philosophy and practices regarding involvement of the broader occupational society, as a collaborative partner in career education, is voluminous. By contrast, the frequency with which the home/family structure has been highlighted as an equal partner in this effort obviously lags far behind. One of the prime reasons why this monograph has been prepared, as a separate publication, is that we hope to bring a more proper and appropriate emphasis to the home/family structure as a vital component in the effective delivery of career education.

To accomplish this mission, the contents of this monograph are divided into three major sections. First, some general thoughts and recommendations of local K-12 career education coordinators regarding parental involvement in career education will be discussed. Following this, a number of examples of specific efforts in local communities to increase parental involvement will be given. Finally, an attempt will be made to draw both these general recommendations and specific discussions of practice together in a single set of suggested parent activities in a community collaborative career education effort.

General Thoughts and Recommendations of Participants

The local career education coordinators who participated in the miniconferences on which this, and other monographs in this series, is based seemed universally agreed that parents are—and should be—major influences on career decisions made by their children. Several were knowledgeable of the research literature which consistently indicates that youth tend to visit with their parents regarding career choices much more frequently than they visit with either teachers or counselors about such matters. Almost without exception, when the topic of "parents and career education" was raised, these participants agreed that parents have both rights and responsibilities with respect to helping their children in the career decisionmaking process. In this sense, there

seemed to be no argument that parents are involved in providing career education to their children.

To recognize that parents interact with their children regarding career decisions is, of course, not to say that parents are necessarily involved in a *collaborative* career education effort with both educators and with other members of the broader community. The term "collaboration" carries clear implications of working *together* toward solution of problems which are of common concern. When put in this context, participants expressed widely differing points of view. Many, for example, gave repeated examples of how difficult it is to get parents to attend any kind of function sponsored by the Education system. Others were equally insistant that, if career education is used as the vehicle, parents can, in large numbers, be found willing to participate actively with educators in career education efforts.

Since participants in these miniconferences were actually practitioners in local school settings, it is not surprising that many made reference to the fact that some parents apparently lack both the interest and the ability to work constructively with their own children or with educators on matters related to career education. Others were insistent that parent education programs in career education can be very effective in turning this situation around.

There were two general recommendations—each made by a different set of participants—which, as they stand, appear to be in conflict. One group of participants were very insistent that efforts to involve parents with educators should, in no way, be limited to career education. They pointed out, for example, that some school systems have developed special groups such as "Parents of Cheerleaders," "Title I Parents," "Special Education Parents," and a host of others. They were very much opposed to adding "Career Education Parents" to this kind of growing list. There were two major points they made supporting their recommendation here. First, they pointed out that the time of parents available for interacting with educators is very limited indeed. When parents take time out of their own schedules to come to the Education system, these participants felt strongly that the entire topic of "Education" should be open for discussion. Second, they felt that, if the career education effort is truly one to be infused throughout the entire curriculum and at all grade levels, it would be philosophically inconsistent to make "career education" a special topic for discussion with parents.

A second group of participants made a different but equally telling argument. They started from an assumption that, if parents are to become supporters of career education, it is essential that they become involved in its delivery. If this is to happen, these participants felt that a minimum amount of time should be devoted to telling parents what career education is. Instead, they felt the primary effort needed was one devoted to helping parents discover things they can *do* as participants in the delivery of career education. For this to occur, they strongly recommended special parent meetings oriented specifically around the topic of "career education".

Both of these basic arguments are partially right. Certainly, even the most avid proponents of career education will recognize that the parent's basic interest is in his/her child, not in any particular part of the Education system. Thus, when parents interact with any educator, it is both natural and reasonable that the generic topic under discussion be that of how the Education *system* is affecting the child—not just how a particular part of that system operates. On the other hand, if our purpose, as educators, in communicating with parents extends beyond *informing* them and actually includes *involving* them as active participants in the education of their children, then it is equally essential that educators be prepared to visit with parents about specific topics in Education (such as "career education") and to make specific suggestions to parents of ways in which they can be positive contributors to the teaching/learning process. In general, recommendations of participants for resolving this apparent conflict seemed to include: (a) a discussion of the nature, purposes, and goals of career education should be conducted with parents as part of a broader discussion of the nature, purposes, and goals of the entire Education system. That is, the goal of "preparing youth for work" should be seen by parents as only one of the goals of Education; and (b) if parents are to become effective partners in the collaborative career education effort, they need to be shown specific things they can do to supplement and to complement career education efforts now taking place within the Education system itself. The career education efforts of parents and the career education efforts of the Education system should be joined together in ways that will provide maximum benefits for youth.

A third major general concern of participants centered around questions related to the extend to which parents should be made aware and knowledgeable regarding the process of career development. This concern was raised by participants who reported parental fears that career education may be an effort aimed at forcing premature career choices on youth. It was also voiced by other participants who reported that some parents seemed to perceive career education's "hidden agenda" as being one of encouraging more youth to enroll in vocational education programs at the secondary and/or postsecondary education levels. Most participants expressing this concern were apparently convinced that it would not be difficult to supply parents with the kinds of factual knowledge required to alleviate such fears. For example, it should not be difficult for parents to understand that career education's emphasis on "career awareness" at the elementary/middle school levels is designed primarily to acquaint youth with the general nature and necessity for an occupational society as part of the total society. Neither should it be difficult to explain to parents that, in a career development sense, the primary emphasis of career education at the secondary school level is on career exploration rather than on making firm and "final" career decisions.

It may be slightly more difficult to explain to parents that the career education concept places equal emphasis on both the "right to choose" and the "right to change" as equally sacred rights of all persons. Yet, such understandings are essential to communicate if parents are to really understand both the emphasis

career education places on the career decisionmaking skills required by today's youth and the general employability skills that will allow them to change with change in the occupational society.

Still greater difficulty may be expected when parents observe that, in communities such as New Albany, Indiana (where Jim Williams is Career Education Coordinator) and in Toms River, New Jersey (where Joe Tomaselli has assumed career education leadership responsibilities) data have been collected demonstrating convincingly that one of the results of a strong career education effort at the elementary and junior high school levels is the presence of both more and better students enrolling in high school vocational education programs. To explain this will demand that parents clearly understand the importance career education places both on expanding youth knowledge of the variety of educational/occupational options available and the importance career education places on protecting freedom of choice for the individual.

Still another example of a basic career education goal that may be difficult for many parents to understand—and still more difficult for many to accept—is the emphasis career education places on reducing bias and stereotyping as deterrents to full freedom of career choice for all persons. The problem here is, by no means, restricted to parents. As Jimmy Dolan (from the Boone County, West Virginia school system) observed, many of today's elementary school teachers are women whose own personal views are opposed to efforts aimed at reducing sex bias and stereotyping and, when the local Board of Education is composed entirely of *men* (as is true in Boone County, West Virginia where Jimmy works) the problem may not be an easy one to solve. The general recommendation made by these participants is that this is a problem career education advocates should face head-on and without apology. Many are now doing so as will be discussed in a later monograph in this series. In terms of handling parent concerns in this area, participants seemed to feel that, if parents receive accurate information regarding both the negative effects of bias and stereotyping on full freedom of career choice along with information regarding the changing nature of our occupational society, some progress can and will be made in overcoming parental objections to this career education emphasis. Only rarely was a participant found who reported it necessary to downplay this point.

A fourth basic concern of participants centered around the realization that it may be very difficult to interest many parents, no matter how appealing the message, in participating actively in implementing career education efforts. Those voicing such concerns quoted statistics that said, for example, that, for any given function to which a school system invites parents to discuss educational matters, only about 5% of parents can be expected to show up. This has led some school systems to give up on plans for working actively with parents. Other participants reported related concerns associated with the costs necessary to encourage greater parent participation. Such things as special mailings, open houses, coffee sessions, and telephone calls to all parents do, of course, cost money. More than one participant reported that, because schools are busy

today looking for every possible way of cutting back on operating costs, their school district has ceased all efforts to involve parents that cost money. Some participants, on the other hand, reported a variety of innovative ways of reaching parents that involved no substantial financial outlays. Several of these will be described in the next section of this monograph. Here, the important point to be made is that the question of the proportion of parents who can be expected to become involved in the delivery of career education is obviously directly and importantly related to a school system's plans for involvement of parents in the total career education effort.

Some participants reported that, no matter how hard they tried, relatively little success in gaining parental participation in career education could be found. For example, Marian Erath from the High Point, North Carolina school system indicated this to be the case there. Similarly, Helen Smith (from Rome, Georgia) reported little response when she included a special "report to parents" on career education and sent it to parents along with their child's report card. At the other extreme, Bert Nixon, from the Snake River School District in Blackfoot, Idaho, reported 75-80 percent parent participation in that school system's career education efforts.

The potentially powerful motivation career education holds for involvement of parents was well put by Gloria Whitman, Career Education Coordinator in Newton Square, Pennsylvania. Gloria observed that parents themselves have a wide variety of kinds of needs for interacting with educators and that, if the efforts we design are aimed at meeting such parental needs—as opposed to being designed around how parents can help us meet our goals—parental participation may well improve. Gloria's point is particularly appropriate when one considers the concept of career education. In the first place, we know that youth—many youth—do visit with their parents about problems associated with career choices. Certainly, a parent who has the opportunity of learning information and procedures appropriate for responding to such concerns could be expected to express at least some interest in doing so. Further, since the topic of career education is put in the context of lifelong learning—a "womb to tomb" approach—it obviously holds potential interest for many parents who are, themselves, contemplating some kind of career change. Finally, "parenting", in a career education sense, is surely part of one's "career." For all of these reasons, participants felt that career education may well be a relatively effective vehicle for use in encouraging parent/educator interaction.

With this general discussion of issues raised by participants, we now turn to a description of specific examples illustrating ways local K-12 career education coordinators have found to be effective in increasing parent involvement.

Involving Parents in Career Education: Current Examples of Practice

Of all "miniconference" participants sharing examples of ways of involving parents in career education, the single most comprehensive effort was reported

by Ed Myers, Career education Coordinator in Cranston, Rhode Island. Because of the comprehensiveness of Ed's approach, it is described here in some detail.

Entitled the PARENTS IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, this effort began about five years ago. It started with four elementary school counselors, three elementary school teachers, and eight parents sitting down together to talk about what parents need to know to help their children in career planning. Educators at the senior high level noticed this activity and counselors, at that level, devised a senior high school component for Ed. During the following year, two of Cranston's three junior high schools proceeded to develop similar efforts at the junior high school level. As a result, they now have a K-12 model covering the elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels.

Regardless of which level of the K-12 system one observes in Cranston, there are several common themes running throughout this effort. First, conscientious efforts are devoted toward helping parents learn some general information regarding the career development process and some basic knowledge—including an acquaintance with OE's 15 occupational clusters—regarding the nature of the occupational society. Second, there is a definite emphasis on helping parents learn better how to communicate effectively with their own children. This effort includes an emphasis on providing each child with a positive sense of self worth. Third, a strong emphasis is placed on helping parents discover and use opportunities the community provides to serve as a learning laboratory about the occupational society. As Ed pointed out, for every field trip a school can arrange, the child's parents can arrange 100—including Saturday morning shopping trips, vacations, and a variety of other devices.

According to Ed, the key to the success of this effort are the meetings counselors (or, in some schools, teachers) hold with parents. During their first year of operation, Ed had a small amount of money available for use in paying the first 8 parents involved in this project. Those parents were very helpful in this parent program and served as "Parent Co-leaders" in working side by side with counselors in conducting meetings for other parents. In addition, these eight parents spent a great deal of time calling other parents and urging them to attend this series of parent meetings. This model of "parent co-leaders" working collaboratively with either counselors or teachers in a single school for purposes of holding these meetings is one that has continued—although, now that special funds are no longer available, such parent co-leaders now serve on a volunteer basis rather than as paid employees of the school system. Ed reports that, almost always, when a group of parents comes together to participate in this project, they find a few who seem to profit especially greatly from the sessions. It is these "turned on parents" who are asked to become "PARENT CO-LEADERS" during the following year.

In order to encourage parent participation, Ed asked his original parent group to suggest ways to be used in encouraging other parents to attend. One such way involved personal telephone calls from the original eight to other

parents. In terms of written communications with prospective parent participants, they suggested several things including: (a) DON'T send notices of such meetings to parents on "standard size white paper with ditto printing". Instead, use different sized paper from that parents are used to seeing and use different colored paper.; and (b) use special headings at the top of the invitation that will "grab" the parent's interest immediately. For example, headings they have used include such things as "HAS YOUR CHILD EVER SAID ONE DAY THAT HE WANTS TO BE A DOCTOR—AND THE NEXT DAY THAT HE WANTS TO BE AN INDIAN CHIEF_"; or "WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD MAKE CAREER DECISION_"; or simply "WE WANT *YOU*." In addition, Ed now uses such things as: (a) newspaper ads; (b) radio spots; (c) flyers placed in local grocery stores; and (d) announcements made to participants in adult education classes. Even with all of these devices, Ed reports that parent participation is still not as high as he hopes it eventually will be.

To help make this total effort effective, Ed calls on a number of different kinds of community resources. For example, in order to help operate some of the parent sessions, he has found it useful to utilize personnel from local mental health settings who are currently operating either one of the SYSTEMATIC TRAINING FOR EFFECTIVE PARENTING (STEP) programs or one of the PARENT EFFECTIVENESS TRAINING (PET) programs. He feels its very easy to adapt such programs in ways that allow for the teaching of many career education concepts to parents. Other kinds of community resources he uses include the TV stations in the area. To use TV programs, he asks parents to make lists of careers thay have seen illustrated on the TV shows they watch. Teachers then ask children to make similar lists of careers they have observed on the TV programs they watch. Parents and their children are then asked to compare and discuss the lists each has compiled.

At the present time, Ed has developed a handbook for use in the elementary component of his program and has spread the program itself to several other school districts in Rhode Island. He is very positive about what he's doing and strongly recommends that others consider similar approaches. Many others are, indeed, doing so—in spite of the fact they had not heard about Ed's program. Some of those examples will be described now.

Another very exciting example of a systematic effort to involve parents in career education was reported by Libby Schmidt, Career Education Coordinator in the Brevard County Schools, Rockledge, Florida. Libby reported on a Florida program devised by Ellen Amatea (author of THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD) entitled "GOING PLACES." This program, now having undergone field testing in five Florida counties (including Libby's) is six weeks in length aimed at bringing senior high school students and their parents together in meetings where both can receive a wide variety of kinds of career information at the same meetings. In Brevard County, the program operated through the initiative of counselors who encouraged parents and their children to come meet together. Starting with 13 parent participants, they still had 7 left by the end of

the 6 week period—which Libby felt is pretty good. She reported that communication between parents and their childrens at these sessions was very good and open—and that parents seemed especially interested in such things as the VIEW system, the OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK HANDBOOK, and many other kinds of career information materials that had been in the school system for some time. As part of this 6 week effort, they asked both parents and their children to take John Holland's SELF DIRECTED SEARCH, put the instruments themselves in a "time capsule," and pulled them out for discussion near the end of the six week period. Libby reported that this seemed to work especially well. The entire GOING PLACES program should have completed its field testing and be ready for use by any school system by December 1979, according to Libby's report.

In the Snake River School District located in Blackfoot, Idaho, Bert Nixon is gaining direct parent involvement in career education through arrangements where student homework assignments include something related to career education that the student will hopefully ask his/her parent to help complete. For example, if the child is given a mathematics assignment, the teacher tries to include in that assignment a requirement that career implications of the particular element of math involved should be discovered and reported as part of the homework. Bert reports good reponse to this approach with 75-80% of parents willing to help pupils with these kinds of assignments. In addition, since his school district is in a community dominated by persons belonging to the Mormon Church, Bert has been able to encourage family discussions of "careers" in which children are interested as part of the "Family Night" which, for Mormons, takes place every Monday night. The Mormon Church has produced some specific career education materials for use in "career education-like" activities involving parents and their children. These materials appear to be very high quality.

A very interesting and innovative approach to gaining parent acquaintanceship with and participation in career education was reported by Barbara Wilson, Career Education Coordinator in South Burlington, Vermont. There, Barbara has organized what she calls the "TUPPERWARE APPROACH" to parent involvement in career education. It is part of a broader effort to involve the total community in career education which Barbara calls her COMMUNITY CAREER EDUCATION EXTENSION SERVICE. Basically, the "Tupperware" aspect of this broader effort involves getting parents together, usually in the evening, in groups of 10-12 at the home of one of the parents. Up to 3 educators from the South Burlington School District join these parents as members of the group. During the evening, parents are allowed to raise whatever questions they have regarding career education and are then led into a discussion where they (the parents) "brainstorm" possible ways in which they might contribute to making the total effort still more successful. Barbara had originally planned on conducting only 20 such "tupperware sessions" during the 1978-79 school year, but the effort turned out to be so successful this number was expanded. Apparently, a number of innovative parent ideas have

emerged from this activity leading to greatly increased parental involvement in the career education effort.

A similar kind of parent involvement activity is taking place in Kimball, Nebraska. There, Joan DeLong reported that she and the elementary school principal hold "INFORMATION PARTIES" for parents of pupils who are about to be promoted from the 5th to the 6th grade. These "parties," held at the school during the evening, are scheduled for about 12 sets of parents at a time. About 40% of the families are represented by at least one parent and, about 25% of the time, both parents attend these "parties". Joan made it clear that the basic purpose of these "parties" is to provide parents an opportunity to ask any questions they want about the entire Education system in Kimball. That is, these "parties" were not devised for, nor do they operate as, only career education functions. Still, Joan indicated they are helpful in gaining parental understanding of and involvement in career education because many parents are asking questions about it. Helen Smith, from Rome, Georgia agreed with Joan that the parent meetings should cover the entire range of Education and not be limited, in any way, strictly to the topic of career education. Helen was especially positive about the potential of linking parent concerns for the basic skills with the total career education effort and felt they fit very naturally together.

Helen Smith raised an additional very important point for consideration when she pointed out that the frequently mentioned practice of asking each parent to visit the elementary school classroom to talk about his/her occupation is not a completely viable approach to take in many communities. For example, in Rome, Georgia where Helen works, she indicated that many pupils have parents who are not employed—or have only one parent—or who actually are living with someone other than their parents. She reported that they are making progress with such pupils by asking them to find an adult friend or relative to use as their "career resource person" in this kind of classroom activity.

Vic Pinke, Career Education Consultant at the Northern Trails Area Education Agency in Clear Lake, Iowa described the "advisor/advisee" system they are now using to encourage parents, teachers, and students to visit together about the student's progress in Education. He, too, indicated that, while a "careers" concern often appears in such meetings, that is only one of several reasons why the system was initiated. Vic's specialized emphasis on directly involving parents in only the career education effort has centered primarily around the special women's equity program they have conducted during the past year. While in this, its first year of operation, this program has had limited parent attendance, Vic feels this should improve in time.

A program similar to Vic's "advisor/advisee" approach is operating in McCall, Idaho for 9th grade students. There, according to Jerry Randolph, all freshman students meet with their parents and a school counselor to map out a 4 year program tentatively listing the courses the student plans to take in each of the four years. This plan is further broken down into a "bare bones minimum" that must be taken and then extended to the total range of electives

from which each student is allowed to choose. Related to the central concerns of this monograph is the fact that, in this school system, each freshman is provided an opportunity to undergo group counseling in three areas: (a) "Changing roles of men and women"; (b) "peer counseling"; and (c) "Parenting and Family Relations." When asked what percent of the parents attend the 4 year planning conferences he described, Jerry replied that 100% of the parents attend—due, in part, to the fact that the school system refuses to enroll the student for the 9th grade and beyond unless this has taken place. This is certainly one way of gaining parental involvement—i.e., do as Jerry does and simply make it a school requirement.

Another program similar to that described both by Vic and by Jerry is operating in the Weber School District of Ogden, Utah where Thera Johnson serves as Career Education Coordinator. Again, concentrating at the 9th grade level, each student meets with his/her counselor and one or both parents to devise a three year senior high school course scheduling plan. In this school district, an integral part of each such plan is a requirement that each student indicate a tentative career choice by picking one of the 15 OE career clusters in which the student thinks may eventually be chosen. Students are encouraged to select only the *name* of an occupational cluster—not a specific occupation within that cluster—so that maximum career exploration within that cluster can be undertaken. If, at a later time, the student decides to change his/her tentative career choice to a different cluster, the parents must be consulted and must concur with that decision. As part of this joint parent/student/counselor meeting, each student plans the 75 hours of required community "hands on" career exploration work experience that is included in the total career education effort in Ogden. By being present while such decisions are being made, parents not only have an opportunity to learn more about the nature, goals, and methods of career education, but also to suggest ways in which this community experience may be more profitable for their child.

The idea of asking parents to come into elementary school classrooms and talk about their work is one apparently in operation in many communities. Apparently, in spite of the fact that this approach obviously cannot be expected to be applicable for all children, it is generally successful and accepted when it is used. A good example of this was reported to participants by Winnie Hoersch who teaches in the Pioneer Elemenntary School in Bismarck, North Dakota. Winnie indicated that, in her school, parents are often asked to come into the classroom and talk about their work. Some agree to come and others don't. The fact that some refuse, according to Winnie, makes this kind of activity no less valid or desirable.

In New Albany, Indiana, parents are involved in the school system's career education beginning at the Kindegarten level. There, Jim Williams reports that he and his staff have devised a publication entitled "CE and ME" which includes a handbook containing suggestions for parent involvement in career education from the Kindergarten through Grade 6. Each pupil has a "CE and ME" file in which career education experiences, K-6—including those involv-

ing parents—is recorded.

Carolyn Corcoran, from the South Portland, Maine School District, has initiated, as part of that career education effort, a "COMMUNICATIONS CAREER GUIDANCE INSTITUTE" originally designed under arrangements where *teachers* went out into the community to learn about the different kinds of communications skills needed in the occupational society. This has now been extended to include a similar kind of "Communications Career Guidance Institute" for parents of students in that school district.

Career education efforts do not have to be in operation for several years—or have received large amounts of money for initial funding—before educators realize the desirability of involving parents in the effort. An excellent example of this was reported by Cecelia Morris who, as an elementary school teacher, is one of two persons responsible for coordinating the career education effort in Diamond, Missouri. There, the effort began by letting teachers become acquainted with the career education concept and enlisting their participation. Once initial teacher enthusiasm has been built, they devised a letter to parents telling them about career education in the Diamond school system and asking parents to reply by indicating: (a) the name of their occupations; and (b) their interest in serving as community career resource persons in the elementary school classrooms. Cecelia reported that parent response was very positive to this effort and that parent involvement is now an integral part of the total career education effort in Diamond.

An intriguing variation of the "career resource person in the classroom" approach which has been adapted for purposes of increasing parent involvement can be seen the career education effort of the Peoria, Illinois Public School System. This effort, begun in 1971 by Chet Duggar who still coordinates it, is entitled the "PERSON CENTERED INTERVIEW." The basic idea behind this approach is that, if teachers can be motivated and shown how to help students learn the *process of inquiry*, students can use their "inquiry skills" to interact with classroom visitors in ways that allow the visitor to express his/her own values rather than responding to those the teacher may have encouraged students to acquire. Using the "PERSON CENTERED INTERVIEW" approach, the career education effort in Peoria invited parents from all socioeconomic levels to come into classrooms and allow students to inquire of them with respect to the work that they do. Chet Duggar reports that this approach has been extremely valuable in encouraging the expression of a wide variety of kinds of work values and helping pupils acquire a respect for the contributions all kinds of occupations make to our total society. Originally begun only at the K-8 level, Chet told us that this system has now spread to the secondary school level where it is now being used by some teachers. He also indicated that it is much more difficult to use this approach at the secondary school, as opposed to the elementary school, level.

Linda Poole is Curriculum Director for the Screvens County School System in Sylvania, Georgia and "career education" is included as one among her many leadership responsibilities in that school system. Linda had heard about

and was intrigued with the positive potential of using "job shadowing" as a means of helping junior high school age youth begin to explore various occupations. Yet, because of State rules and regulations, she discovered it impossible to provide students with time during the school day to engage in "shadowing" because, if they did so, they would technically not be "in school" and, consequently, the school system would lose State Average Daily Attendance (ADA) credit on which State financial aid to the school system is based. As a result, Linda devised a plan under which parents were encouraged to take their children, during the Christmas holidays, on job shadowing experiences for a two day period. Using this plan, 70 Eighth Grade students were able, with the help of their parents, to engage in "job shadowing." Obviously, many others in this school system were not able to participate but those who did found it to be an enjoyable and productive learning experience.

The basic principle of involving parents in career education with their children at times when school isn't in session is also illustrated in the career education effort coordinated by Bernie Novick from the Woodbridge Public Schools in Woodbridge, New Jersey. There, Bernie told us that, once a year, the Chevron Oil Company located in his area opens up their entire plant on Saturday so that workers can bring their families to the plant and show them exactly what they do at their job. Obviously, this activity directly involves and benefits only students whose parent(s) are employed at this one plant. Just as obviously, there is no reason why this innovative idea couldn't be extended to many other business/industrial settings which are normally closed on Saturdays.

Finally, it seems appropriate to conclude this section illustrating specific ways in which parents have become involved in career education with that given by Bob Towne, a Fourth Grade "lead teacher" in the Kennebunk School Department at Kennebunk, Maine. As part of his daily routine, Bob prepares a document entitled "TODAY IN HISTORY" in which he outlines the complete schedule of activities for the day that he plans to use with his 4th grade pupils—including a specific listing of all the career education activities that will be included in the schedule for that day. According to Bob, about 90% of his pupils take the "TODAY IN HISTORY" document home to their parents each night. As a result, Bob is helping the parents of his pupils better understand what career education is, why it is needed, and how it is used as a vehicle for helping pupils learn more subject matter. He told us that it takes him about one hour per day to prepare this document and that, by doing so, he has found rich rewards of personal satisfaction coming to him as a teacher. If only *all* teachers were like Bob Towne, imaging what an outstanding K-12 school system we would have!

Even the few illustrative examples presented in this section should be sufficient to make it clear that, at the local K-12 level, career education practitioners *are* involving parents in many significant and creative ways as collaborative partners in career education. They have not waited for the "literature" on this important aspect of career education to be developed by others. Instead,

they have simply recognized a need and proceeded to find and invent ways of meeting that need. Based in large part on what these participants have taught me, I want now to devote the third section of this monograph to a discussion of what seem to me to represent implications for career education.

Parents And Career Decisions of Youth: Implications For Career Education

It is now time that the career education movement, in its attempts to implement at least the K-12 portion of career education on a nationwide basis, move actively and vigorously to make the home/family structure the third major community component through which career education is delivered to youth. The career education effort, in the beginning, quite properly focused on gaining initial knowledge, understanding, acceptance, and involvement from those within the Education profession. This was followed by a concentrated attempt to interest and involve those aspects of the broader community represented by business/labor/industry/Government. This, too, was an essential step in the evolution of career education. Having made significant, even though admittedly still incomplete, progress in developing both of these components, it is now time to attempt an equally significant developmental effort for what has long been regarded as the third basic "leg" of the career education concept—i.e., the home and family structure.

The following major generalizations are those which I think the participants in these miniconferences helped me to understand. I believe each to be important as we now move toward a major effort to bring the home/family structure into a proper and appropriate role in the total career education effort.

1. **Career education implementation efforts must include an aspiration, but not a goal, of reaching all of the parents of all of the youth in the K-12 Education system.** The degree to which we have done all that is *possible* to do, not the degree to which we have done all that *needs* to be done, should be the proper criterion for use in evaluating the effectiveness of application of this generalization. We know that some parents will not be *interested*, others will not be *willing*, and still others will not be *able* to contribute all that we would like them to do in delivering effective career education to their children. The fact that this is so does not negate the validity nor the appropriateness of the effort. The same practical kinds of restrictions career education faces here apply equally as well to any other goal of Education—(e.g., citizenship education, health education, etc.). Yet, the understanding and involvement of parents is an essential factor in attaining the objectives of every basic goal of Education. The fact that we will not be able to successfully involve all parents is no excuse for ignoring our responsibility for trying to do so.

2. **Special efforts must be mounted so as to assure we are reaching as many parents as possible in enlisting their support for and involvement in career education.** It is one thing for a given educational effort to seek the sup-

port of parents. It is quite another thing when the ultimate success of that effort is dependent on active parent involvement. The career education effort belongs in the latter category. Career education seeks parent involvement, not because it would be nice to have it, but rather because such involvement is necessary to the ultimate success of the total career education effort. Thus, the kind of cursory attempts to communicate with parents that characterize many other parts of American Education cannot be considered sufficient in the case of career education. We will have to use such things as Barbara Wilson's "tupperware approach," Joan DeLong's "information parties," Bob Towne's "today in history," and the multi-media approaches of Ed Myers, along with many other kinds of things, if we are to reach parents successfully. Most of all, we will have to use parents themselves as "career education ambassadors" with other parents. To do anything less than the absolutely best we can do will be equivalent to not meeting our responsibilities.

3. **There are multiple reasons for believing that career education may have greater potential for effectively reaching and involving parents than many other parts of Education.** Included among the most obvious of such reasons are the following: (a) the content of career education has applicability for career decisions many parents must make as well as for those facing their children. It may appeal to some parents on that basis; (b) career decisions made by youth will be among the most important they make in their entire lives. Such decisions obviously affect the lives of parents as well as the lives of their children. Thus, it is a topic that has an almost universal appeal among parents; (c) youth do consistently seek to visit with their parents about career concerns—and most parents would like to be able to help their children through such visits. Career education holds out the promise—even though (as yet) not the evidence—of being able to provide such help; and (d) since career education gives parents something to *do* as well as something to *support*, it has a greater inherent appeal than will things calling for more passive parent activity. This high potential for appealing to many parents justifies the intensive efforts to reach them recommended in the second generalization made in this section.

4. **It is not essential that all parents become active participants in career education in order to have parental participation be regarded as an important component in the total career education effort.** Career education efforts, of course, will hopefully be extended to all youth, but in a wide variety of ways. No one, for example, should degrade the Chevron Oil Company that Bernie Novick gave simply because it reached only parents and children of Chevron Oil employees. Similarly, only credit, not criticism, is due such community groups as Junior Achievement, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., youth groups of the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary, 4-H Clubs, or any of the youth clubs associated with vocational education for reaching as many youth as they due. Because none of these reaches all youth does not, in any way, mean that they are not valuable participants in the total community career education effort. Just so, the fact that not all parents will become active "partners" in career education does not mean that this resource

should not be a valuable part of the total career education delivery effort.

5. **Special efforts should be mounted to serve those youth whose parent(s) are unwilling and/or unable to become active participants in career education.** The potential for positive contributions to career education on the part of parents is so great that its absence, for any given youth, must be atoned for by other means. Sometimes this will involve the use of adult role models from other parts of the community. At other times, it may involve special efforts in career awareness/career exploration—including special kinds of "learning jobs" in the public and/or private sector of the community. This generalization has special importance for severely economically disadvantaged youth whose parents—and neighborhoods—may not be able to provide the kinds of help called for by career education. The need for such special help, however, is surely not limited to severely economically disadvantaged youth, but may occur at any strata in the socioeconomic order.

6. **It is essential that parents be helped to understand career education as part of understanding American Education, not apart from such broader understandings.** The goal of preparing youth for work is only one of a number of basic goals of American Education. To separate this single goal from all others in communicating with parents is to run the risks of either: (a) giving it an undue emphasis that it does not deserve; or (b) failing to show parents how all of the basic goals of American Education are important and inter-related. We will do parents and their children a great injustice if we attempt to picture the goal of preparing youth for work as the single or most important goal of American Education. We will be doing them an equally great injustice if we fail to help them see how career education extends the meaning of that goal far beyond readying youth for their first jobs and includes total lifestyle implications. So, too, must parents be helped to understand career education as a vehicle for basic change in Education and as a vehicle for use in gaining greater school/community interaction. If we are either ashamed of what we are doing—or find ourselves incapable of explaining it to parents in terms they can understand—then we should cease doing it. Career education is a simple, straightforward set of concepts that need have no fear in this regard.

7. **A career education effort with parents should include activities aimed at giving parents basic understandings regarding career development, basic skills in acquiring and using career information, and basic skills in communicating with their children regarding the career decisionmaking process.** Such skills and understandings are not so complex as to demand they remain the exclusive property of experts in career development. On the contrary, at the operational level where parents are called upon to use them, they are relatively simple and straightforward. Certainly, there is nothing very complex about picturing career development as a longitudinal process that continues throughout most of life. Neither is it difficult to show parents the common sources of occupational/educational information and provide them with the skills necessary to use them. Finally, there are a variety of well developed and tested approaches to increasing parent/child communication

readily available to any who want to take advantage of them. For too long, we have known—but done nothing about—the fact that youth do raise the topic of career decisions with their parents. It is time we ceased complaining about parent ineptness in this area and, instead, concentrated a sizeable part of the career education effort on helping parents acquire such skills and understanding.

8. **The efforts of parents and those of professional school counselors need to be more closely merged in the career education effort.** To call, as was done above, for providing parents with career development skills and understandings in no way means that such skills and understandings are intended to be substituted for those of the professional school counselor. On the contrary, it is essential that they be joined together in a joint effort to provide assistance in the career development of youth. Joint parent/child/counselor conselor conferences should represent an important goal of every comprehensive K-12 career education effort. The one thing that youth do *not* need is to hear conflicting "facts"—or interpretations of facts—from their parents and from their counselors. Some counselors, like some parents, will not be interested in participating in career education and should not be blamed if their professional interests lie elsewhere. Most of today's professional school counselors, however, appear both increasingly interested in career guidance and in sharing their skills and expertise with others who are interested in and concerned about helping youth in the career decisionmaking process.

9. **The efforts of parents and classroom teachers must become better correlated and more effectively integrated in the total career education effort.** No matter how long anyone's list of "actors" in the collaborative career education effort becomes, the classroom teacher will remain the key "actor" in delivering career education to youth. It can happen in no other way. It is vital that parents recognize and understand the ways in which classroom teachers are using career education as a vehicle for motivating students to learn what teachers are trying to teach. This can happen only if parents are actively involved, both as resource persons in classrooms, and in home/family activities designed to tie directly in with assignments students receive from their teachers. As "both parents employed" families become more and more common, it is extremely important that such parents recognize the opportunity this affords to help reach career education's goal of reducing sex bias and stereotyping in career decisionmaking. Since most parents are employed outside the field of Education, their ability to help youth learn about and appreciate the career implications of their subject matter may, in many instances, exceed that of the child's teachers. The importance of using such expertise is critical to the success of career education. Parents working together with classroom teachers is an important and basic goal of career education. It is time that it occured more often.

10. **Parents are needed as a strong voice in convincing the broader occupational society to participate in a collaborative community career education effort.** This generalization grows out of the obvious fact that most

parents are members of that occupational society. Many are in positions where, through their efforts, opportunities for youth to engage in career awareness/career exploration activities in their communities can be enhanced. So, too, can many parents play a significant role in providing opportunities for educators to learn more about that society. For example, I have heard of one community where, in the major industrial plant, arrangements were made for parent/teacher conferences to be conducted at the plant site—with employees being being given their regular 15 minute "break time" plus an additional 15 minutes to participate in such conferences. Some parent was instrumental in making this arrangement. The possibilities of other examples are obviously legion. They should be "invented" and used.

11. **Parents need to become conscious of the need for and able to talk with their children about the parent's occupation in a positive fashion.** Too many parents are still, if they refer to their own work at all in conversations with their children, do so in a negative or derogatory sense. Whenever this occur, the child receives a negative impression regarding work. Far worse, the child receives a negative impression of the parent. One of the best ways we have found to overcome this is through the use of parents as career resource persons in the classroom. When parents agree to participate in this fashion, it is highly unusual if the pupils themselves do not discover many positive and worthwhile societal contributions being made through the work of the resource person in his/her occupation. To recognize that an individual dislikes her/his occupation is far different from failing to recognize that the person makes worthwhile societal contributions through that occupation. If youth are to value work, it is essential that their parents do not denigrate it in conversations with their children. This is a very important aspect of the parent's role in the total career education effort.

12. **It is important that parents discover, "invent," and use as many means as possible in helping their children in the career awareness/exploration/planning/decisionmaking process.** The kinds of action examples given by participants in the miniconferences on which this monograph is based may represent a good starting point. It will be recalled that such examples included: (a) helping children discover the career implications of subject matter; (b) putting a "careers" emphasis in discussions with children while on neighborhood shopping trips or on vacations; (c) transporting children to various occupational sites for purposes of career awareness/career exploration during times school is not in session; (d) watching TV shows for purposes of seeing what careers are illustrated in various shows; and (e) taking children to work with the parent during one of the child's vacation days. These few examples—each of which is in actual use somewhere—illustrate two very important points. First, the variety of kinds of activities that parents could "invent" along these lines is almost without limit. Multiple opportunities for doing so are available to any parent. Second, to engage in these kinds of activities offers an excellent opportunity for parents to bring a "careers" emphasis into conversations with their children in ways that illustrate that "work" is only one part of

what Life is all about and that there are other important things to talk about as well.

13. **It is vital that parents help their children see the presence and value of work within the structure of the home/family relationship itself.** Career education seeks to emphasize "work" as a means of meeting the human need of all human beings to do—to achieve—to accomplish something that is beneficial to society and satisfying to the individual. As such, the concept of "work," when used in career education, includes unpaid work as well as paid employment. It is *unpaid work* that allows the family to function as a unit. Children need to recognize themselves, as family members, as contributing to the unpaid work that is essential in any home. They need to recognize—and so appreciate—the benefits that accrue to an individual when his/her work results in providing something of benefit to another human being. The humanistic connotations that career education seeks to bring to the word "work" can be made both relevant and meaningful to youth, perhaps best of all, if discovered within the operations of the home and family. Those parents who are willing to take the time necessary to provide their children with this kind of humanistic understanding of "work" are making very significant contributions to the career education effort. In saying this, I am well aware of the fact that the kinds of value statements being made here—regarding both "work" and "home/family"—will not be consistent with values held by some parents. The fact that this is so does not excuse me from responsibility for including this generalization here.

14. **The parent's role in career education includes an emphasis on helping their children make productive use of leisure time.** Youth with nothing to do very seldom do nothing. If adults give them nothing to do, they tend to find things to do on their own. The concept of "work", as used in career education, places a strong and definite emphasis on helping people gain personal satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment through being able to find productive ways of using their leisure time. The kinds of unpaid work involved here include, of course, work done as a family member. It also includes a variety of forms of volunteer work that is designed to provide some kind of societal benefit. The primary influence on how youth will use their leisure time will surely be the family. If youth are to be fully prepared to take their places as productive members of the occupational society, it is essential that the time they spend outside of their regular paid employment, be spent in ways that will, at the very least, not contribute to lessening their productivity on the job. For those youth whose first jobs are of such a nature that they provide very small psychological rewards from the work they are asked to do, it is especially important that they are aware of and interested in leisure time activities that are both societally productive and personally satisfying to the youth. Those parents who help make this a reality are making major contributions to career education indeed.

Concluding Remarks

It is obvious that the role of parents in career education, as pictured in this monograph, will not be fully compatible with the personal value systems of many of today's parents. There is no doubt but that the career education movement is built around a value system that places a major emphasis on the importance of "work" as part of the total lifestyle of the individual. To many persons, "work" is, as Charlie Brown of "Peanuts" fame is purported to have said, "the crabgrass on the lawn of Life." To advocates of career education, "work" is a central force in giving meaning to life—and to the basic reason why any individual exists. Thus, it should be neither surprising nor particularly disturbing to find many parents who reject and resent the presence of career education in the Education system.

On the other hand, I have a feeling that there are a great many parents—many more than are popularly acknowledged—who believe, as career education advocates do, that one of the basic things wrong with America today is that too many of our citizens have lost their basic belief in and commitment to *productive work* as part of their total lifestyle. If this is so, such parents should be both willing and eager to become partners in the collaborative community effort known as "career education." This movement needs the support and participation of such parents very badly. It is hoped that this monograph may help make this a reality.

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